



Association of Connecticut Ambulance Providers

Testimony of Greg Allard, President

H.B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR
THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023.

Regarding the Dept. of Economic and Community Development- EMS Job Training Funds

Appropriations Conservation and Development Subcommittee- February 16, 2022

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Greg Allard, I am the President of the Association of Connecticut Ambulance Providers, Immediate Past President of the Connecticut EMS Advisory Board and Vice President of American Ambulance Service, Inc. in Norwich.

On behalf of the Association of Connecticut Ambulance Providers, we wanted to express our strong support for the proposed \$15 million in increased funding for the Department of Economic and Community Development's CareerConneCT program. We believe this funding is much needed and would encourage the legislature and DECD to prioritize EMS careers.

Before the pandemic, Emergency Medical Services faced a challenging environment due to the lack of volunteers and the inability to expand the EMS Professional workforce. As our staff and employees continue to work on the frontlines during the pandemic, the workforce has been stretched to its limits and the needs have been more pronounced.

This past fall the American Ambulance Association and National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians sent a letter to Congress pushing for a hearing to address the shortfall and asking for more funding to increase wages. As the letter stated, "When you take a system that was already fragile and stretched it, because you didn't have enough people entering the field, then you throw a public health emergency and all of the additional burdens that it put on our workforce as well as the labor shortages across the entire economy, and it really has put us in a crisis mode."

The letter also warned that "our nation's EMS system is facing a crippling workforce shortage, a long-term problem that has been building for more than a decade. It



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threatens to undermine our emergency 9-1-1 infrastructure and deserves urgent attention by the Congress."

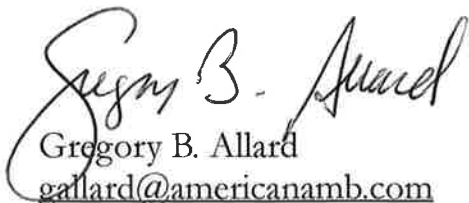
It's a crisis that has made it difficult to hire and even harder to retain EMTs and paramedics, according to an American Ambulance Association survey of 258 EMS organizations across the country. In 2020, nearly a third of the workforce left their ambulance company after less than a year, the survey said. Eleven percent left within the first three months.

Connecticut is not immune to this as we have seen new employees leaving at a rapid pace and experienced employees burning out faster than before. EMS jobs are the entry point for many people to begin a healthcare career. However, some lack access to the career due to up front training costs. Recruitment of new candidates has only grown more challenging due to a variety of factors and the entire industry is impacted by the lack of volunteers coming forward for volunteer EMS services.

We believe it is critically important to provide career pathways for people coming into EMS so that they can have forward career mobility. This could include in-work training programs that fund training for emergency medical technicians who are working to become paramedics. The costs can be prohibitive but on the job training of those experienced individuals who have proven success in this field would only serve to help. It is also a field that once certified there are no shortage of job opportunities in communities across the state and country.

The EMS system nationwide is struggling and needs focused attention. Connecticut should continue to fund initiatives like CareerConnect but also work on developing its own programs for specialized fields like EMS. Our Association of Connecticut Ambulance Providers stands ready and willing to work with the legislature on job training and workforce development initiatives that focus on EMS careers.

Respectfully,



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